

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated April 18, 2005, claims 1, 2, 8 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Endo. Applicants respectfully traverse. Claims 1 and 13 each recite that the inclusion of a corresponding plurality of control stages that are integrated in a single semiconductor body. Endo teaches the use of a plurality of switching circuits K (driving or control stages), but Endo fails to teach or suggest that these plurality of switching circuits K are integrated in a single semiconductor body, as claimed. Still further, the Examiner's analysis fails to address this limitation. As noted by the Applicants at paragraph 31 of the specification, a number of advantages accrue from this integration: a single sensing circuit may be used for monitoring spark generation, overall dimensions are reduced, and recognition pulses may be serially sent to a single pin of the logic unit (instead of using one dedicated pin per line).

Claims 1-3, 8 and 13-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kelly. Applicants respectfully traverse for at least the same reasons as recited above with respect to Endo. There is no teaching or suggestion in Kelly for having the driving stages M1-M3 integrated in a single semiconductor body. The M1, M2 and M3 circuits appear in Kelly to be made from distinct components assembled on a board. The only teaching of integration provided in Kelly is with respect to the combining of circuit 60 and circuit M4 in a single monolithic integrated circuit device. This integration, however, is a low voltage integration.

Claims 1-3, 8, 13-15, 21-24 and 28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Ward. Applicants respectfully traverse with respect to claims 1-3, 8 and 13-15 for at least the same reasons as recited above with respect to Endo and Kelly. There is no teaching

or suggestion in Ward for having the driving stages 8a-8b integrated in a single semiconductor body. The 8a and 8b circuits appear in Ward to be distinct components assembled on a board (see, for comparison, Fig 10 of Ward which illustrates each of the amplifiers 91/97, regulator 94 and an octal counter 130 in the form of a circuit chip).

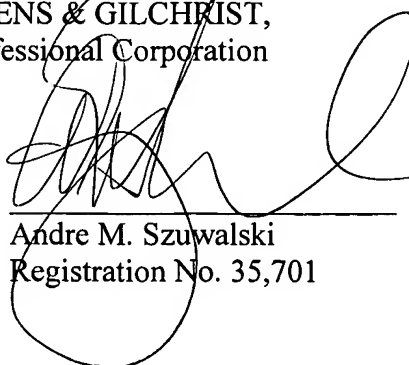
In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the Examiner has not made out a proper Section 102 rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-3, 8 and 13-15 is requested.

Turning next to claims 21-24 and 28, Claim 21 has been amended to include the limitations of claims 23 and 25. Claim 21 is accordingly now believed to be in condition for favorable action and allowance. Claims 26, 27 and 29 have each been amended into independent format to include the limitations of base claim 21. These claims are accordingly now believed to be in condition for favorable action and allowance.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully submit that the application is in condition for favorable action and allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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